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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, a Senator from the State of Rhode Island.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, we thank You for this day and for the freedoms and liberties of this Nation. Bless our leaders with wisdom and compassion so that they may serve You with faithfulness.

Guide our Senators so that they will honor one another and serve the common good. Help them to remember that they live and govern only through Your grace. Lord, pour Your love into their hearts so that their words and actions may be seasoned with Your fragrance.

Also, Lord, extend Your loving-kindness to those in our world who do not experience the blessings of freedom. Use our lawmakers to bring deliverance to captives and to help the oppressed go free. We desire to pray according to Your will. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Honorable SHELDON WHITEHOUSE led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. BYRD).

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, July 25, 2007.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby

appoint the Honorable SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, a Senator from the State of Rhode Island, to perform the duties of the Chair.

ROBERT C. BYRD,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, this morning we will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour. The first half will be controlled by the Republicans. Once morning business is closed, the Senate will resume consideration of the Homeland Security appropriations bill.

I understand there are a number of amendments that are being talked about to be offered on this legislation today. I hope Members come and do that as quickly as possible.

WOUNDED WARRIOR ASSISTANCE ACT OF 2007

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I yesterday asked by unanimous consent that we adopt the Wounded Warrior legislation that was brought to the Senate during the Defense authorization bill in a form of a bipartisan amendment. A number of Senators worked very hard. Senator MURRAY is on the floor. She worked very hard, and a number of Senators have worked very hard on this legislation. It came about as a result of what we learned at Walter Reed about how our returning troops from Iraq and Afghanistan were being basically neglected. They had been wounded, and they were receiving unacceptable and poor treatment when they came home. That failure was learned

about—not only about the veterans care system, which had many bureaucratic failures, but also the physical facilities that were there failed to meet a minimum level of acceptability. The American people were outraged by the facts that came to light, and the Senate took prompt action.

The Wounded Warrior amendment, now in legislation that is before the Senate, would address the substandard facilities we have talked about and we have seen. It would address the lack of seamless transition and develop one when medical care for troops is transferred from the Department of Defense to the Veterans' Administration, which oftentimes in the past has led to diminished care. It addresses the inadequacy of severance pay. It addresses the need for improved sharing of medical records between the Department of Defense and the Veterans' Administration. We are told now that there are as many as 600,000 pending claims of returning veterans. It addresses the inadequate care and treatment of traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder, and a number of other very important items.

So I again renew my request. Yesterday we were told that the Republicans were looking at this. Mr. President, I am going to renew this request. There are all kinds of reasons, I guess, for objecting to something such as this. Now I am told the reason for objecting is the pay raise isn't included. The Wounded Warrior legislation becomes effective upon passage and approval. The pay raise for the troops doesn't become effective until October 1 or January 1—I don't know how the legislation reads, but it is not now. So that would not be a good reason in my estimation, and I think in the estimation of these wounded warriors, for objecting.

The pay raise does not become effective until the beginning of the fiscal year. In fact, I think it is January 1 of next year. It is different than a number

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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